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ples a position of great responsibility and is a great power for national defense. This situation, which offers our libraries the greatest opportunity in their history to demonstrate their educational value to the nation has been fully realized and thoroughly acted upon by the American Library Association.

With its watchword, "War service," this Association has bent its fullest energies to the duty, and its splendid work forms an inspiring chapter in the history of the war. Educational results are mostly indeterminate, but some tangible accomplishments are noted with marveling gratification. I wish all of our people could know of the great fund raised for the war work; of the acquisition of innumerable books; of the erection of the many library buildings and the establishment of branch libraries in our camps; of the library work in hospitals; of the technical and recreative books placed in our forts, naval vessels, camps, and sent abroad; of the labor and time given by trained men to the

work; and of the other countless activities of the "Library war service." It is demonstrated that the library provides as high and important a war service as any other field of effort.

To many this realization of the great power and influence of the library comes with some surprise. The extraordinary development of this branch of our educational system has not been generally comprehended. Indeed, it is a far cry from the modest beginning of the American Library Association in that convention at Philadelphia in 1876 to this great business organization which affects our entire educational and social life. By its progressive methods, this Association has established the public library as a familiar and potent agent of our civilization; and it has made library work a science indeed, efficient, economical, practical. And one has only to study the library history of Europe to realize that you have done pioneer work, and furnished a vitalizing spirit to the library life of the world.

THE FUTURE OF LIBRARY WORK

By ARTHUR E. BOSTWICK, *Librarian, St. Louis Public Library*

When a railroad train is on its way, its future history depends on which way it is heading, on its speed, and on whether its direction and its speed will remain unchanged. With these premises, one may confidently predict that a train which left Chicago at a given hour on one day will reach New York at a given hour on the next. Of course, something may happen to slow the train, or to wreck it, or even to send it back to Chicago, in which cases our predictions will come to naught. This is what the weather man finds. His predictions are based on very similar data. Our weather conditions travel usually across the continent from west to east at a fairly uniform rate. If that rate is maintained, and the direction does not change, and nothing happens to dissipate or alter the

conditions, we can predict their arrival at a given place with a fair degree of accuracy. Those who rail at the weather man's mistakes are simply finding fault with our present inability to ascertain the causes that slow up storm centers, or swerve them in their course, or dissipate them. When we know these things, and know in addition what starts them, we can give up making forecasts and write out a pretty definite weather time-table—as definite and as little subject to change, at any rate, as those issued by the railroads.

My business at this moment is that of a forecaster. We know just where and what the library situation is at present, and some of us think we know where it is headed. If it should keep on in the same direction and at the same rate, we ought to

be able to describe it as it will be, say, in 1950. Of course, it may get headed in some other direction. It may slow down or speed up; it may melt away or strike a rock and be irrecoverably wrecked. If I see any chances of any of these things, it is my business to mention them. If my forecast should turn out a failure no one can prove it until 1950 arrives, and then I shall not care.

To begin with the necessary preliminaries of our forecast—what and where are we now? I have said that I know; probably you think that you do; but as a matter of fact our knowledge is neither comprehensive nor accurate. We need a general library survey. We have, as a sort of statistical framework, the figures now printed annually in tabular form in the A. L. A. Proceedings, but probably no one would maintain that these do, or possibly could, give an adequate idea of the character or extent of the work that our libraries are doing. Those of us who think we know something of it have gained our knowledge by experience and observation and neither is extensive enough in most cases to take the place of a well-considered and properly-managed survey of existing conditions and methods.

In default of a survey, we must, as I have said, fall back upon observation and experience. I can certainly claim no monopoly of these, and what I say in this regard is, of course, largely personal. But it seems to me that the distinguishing marks of library work, as at present conducted, include the following. As you will see, they are all connected and overlap more or less. They are all growth-products. They are:

- 1 Size and expense
- 2 Socialization
- 3 Professionalization
- 4 Popularization
- 5 Nationalization.

First, library work in our country today is large and costly. Extensively it covers a great territory and reaches a huge population. Intensively it embraces a large variety of activities—many that

one would hesitate, on general principles, to class as "library work."

Secondly, a large amount of this increase of activity has been of a kind that we are now apt to call "social." It deals with bodies or classes of people, and it tends to treat these people as the direct objects of the library's attention, instead of dealing primarily with books, as formerly, and only indirectly with their readers. In fact, the persons with whom the library now deals may not be readers at all, except potentially, as when they are users of club or assembly rooms.

Thirdly, librarians are beginning to think of themselves as members of a profession. At first sight this may seem to be a fact of interest only to library workers, and not at all to the public. Its significance may appear if we compare it to the emergence of the modern surgeon with his professional skill, traditions and pride, from the medieval barber who simply followed blood-letting as an avocation. Professionalism is a symptom of a great many things—of achievement and of consciousness of it and pride in it; of a desire to do teamwork and to maintain standards; to make sure that one's work is to be carried on and advanced by worthy successors.

Fourthly, libraries are now conducted for the many; not for the few. It is our aim to provide something for every one who can read, no matter of what age, sex, or condition. We do not even limit ourselves to readers, for we provide picture books for those who are too young to read. We are transferring the emphasis of our work from books to people. This characteristic is closely connected with what I have called "socialization," but it is not the same thing. An institution may deal with all the people without dealing with them socially or in groups; and it may deal entirely with groups without dealing with everybody. The library now does both.

Fifthly, the library is now a national institution, at least in the same sense as is the public school. It is national in extent, national in consciousness, if not national in administration. Our own association

has played its part in this development; the present war has given it a great stimulus. Those who see no nationalism without complete centralization and who say that we are not yet a nation because all our governmental powers are not centered at Washington, will doubtless deny the nationalization of the library. They take too narrow a view.

We may now combine two or more lines of inquiry. In what direction is the library moving in each of these respects? Is it speeding or slowing up? Is there any reason to look for speeding or slowing up in the future?

As regards size and cost, our development has been swift. We cannot, it seems to me, keep up the rate. Twenty years ago the institutions now constituting the New York Public Library circulated a million books. They now circulate ten million. Does anyone believe that twenty years hence they will circulate one hundred million? There must be further increase, because we are not now reaching every person and every class in the community, but it will not and cannot be a mere increase of quantity. We must do our work better and make every item and element in it tell. We must substitute one book well read for ten books skimmed. In place of ten worthless books we must put one that is worth while. There are already signs of this substitution of quality for quantity in our ideals.

Extension, as opposed to intension, has appealed to many enthusiastic librarians as "missionary work." Perhaps the term is well chosen. Some of it is akin to the missionary fervor that sends funds to convert the distant heathen when nominal Christians around the corner are vainly demanding succor, material, mental and spiritual. We have too much of this in the library; attempts to form boys' clubs with artificial aims and qualifications when clubs already formed to promote objects that are very real in the members' minds are ignored or neglected; the provision of boresome talks on "Rubber-culture in Peru" and on "How I climbed Long's

Peak," when members of the community would be genuinely interested in hearing an expert explain the income tax; the purchase of new books that nobody wants when an insistent demand for old standards of sterling worth has never been adequately met; all sorts of forcing from the outside instead of developing from the inside. This kind of thing, like charity, begins properly at home, and the real missionary takes care to set his own house in order before he goes far afield—to fill the nearby demand, when it is good, before attempting to force something on those who do not want it.

It is in this direction that our promise of continued progress lies when we cannot see grounds for expecting great future increase of income.

This leads us naturally to discuss what I have called our socialization, which is just beginning. It is running strong, but there is room for a long course, and that course, I believe, it will take. In the first place, we are functioning more and more as community centers, but there is enormous room for advance. We are straggling all along the line, which is one sign of an early stage. Some of us have not yet awakened to the fact that we are destined to play a great part in community development and community education. Others are reluctantly yielding to pressure. Others have gone so fast that they are in advance of their communities. Take, if you please, the one item of the provision of space for community meetings, regarded by some as the be-all and the end-all of the community center idea. It is really but one element, but it may serve as a straw to show which way the wind blows. Some libraries are giving no space for this purpose; some give it grudgingly, with all sorts of limitations; others give quite freely. None of us gives with perfect freedom. I suppose we in St. Louis are as free as any. In 15 assembly and clubrooms we house 4,000 meetings yearly. Our only limitations are order and the absence of an admission fee. I incline to think that the maintenance of

order should be the only condition. If an admission fee is charged, part of it should go to the library, to be devoted to caring for the assembly and clubrooms and improving them. There are many community gatherings that can be best administered on the plan of a paid admission. These ought not to be excluded. Most of our restrictions are simply exhibits of our reluctance to place ourselves at the complete social disposal of the community. A community is not a community unless it has political and religious interests. If we are going to become socialized at all, why balk at these any more than we should exclude from our shelves books on politics and religion? I look to see socialization, in this and other directions, proceed to such lengths that the older library ideals may have to go entirely by the board. Some of them are tottering now. I have said that I consider this matter of the use of assembly rooms only one item in what I have called socialization. It may all be summed up by saying that we are coming to consider the library somewhat in the light of a community club, of which all well-behaved citizens are members. Our buildings are clubhouses, with books and magazines, meeting rooms, toilet facilities, kitchens—almost everything, in fact, that a good, small club would contain. If you say "then they have ceased to be libraries and are something else," that does not affect me any more than when you show that we are no longer speaking Chaucer's language or wearing the clothes of Alfred the Great.

When we were trying to explain to the architects of the New York branch buildings exactly what we wanted in those structures and met with the usual misconception based on medieval ideas of a library, one of the most eminent architects in the United States suddenly sat up and took notice. "Why, these buildings are not to be *libraries* at all," he said, "they are to be reading clubs." He had learned in a few minutes what many of us still see through a glass darkly.

An even more important manifestation

of what I have called socialization is the extension of occupation groups to which the library is giving special attention and special service. The library has always had in mind one or more of these groups. Once it catered almost entirely to a group of scholars, at first belonging predominantly to the clergy. In later years it added the teachers in schools and their pupils, also the children of the community. These are definite groups, and their recognition in the rendition of service is a social act. Other groups are now being added with rapidity, and we are recognizing in our service industrial workers, business men, artists of various kinds, musicians and so on. The recognition of new groups and the extension of definite library service to them is progress in socialization, and it is going on steadily at the present time.

Just now the most conspicuous group that we are taking in is that of business men. In adjusting our resources and methods to the needs of this group we are changing our whole conception of the scope of a library's collection. As Mr. Dana has pointed out, we now collect, preserve and distribute not books alone, but printed matter of all kinds, and in addition records of other types, such as manuscripts, pictures, slides, films, phonograph discs and piano rolls. Some of these, of course, are needed to adapt our collection to others than the business group—to educators, artists or musicians. We shall doubtless continue to discover new groups and undergo change in the course of adaptation to their needs.

The recognition of special groups and the effort to do them service has proceeded to a certain extent outside the public library, owing to the slowness of its reaction to this particular need. The result has been the special library. I am one of those who are sorry that the neglect of its opportunity by the public library has brought this about, and I hope for a reduction in the number of independent special libraries by a process of gradual absorption and consolidation. The recent acquisition of some formerly independent municipal ref-

erence libraries by the local public libraries is a case in point. There must always be special libraries. The library business of independent industrial and commercial institutions is best cared for in this way. But every group that is merely a section of the general public, set apart from the rest by special needs and tastes, may be cared for most economically by the public library. If its service is not adapted to give such care, rapid and efficient adjustment is called for.

In a library forecast made several years ago, Mr. John C. Dana stated his opinion that the library, as it is, is "an unimportant by-product," that it is to be of importance in the future, but will then have departed from the "present prevailing type." Without necessarily agreeing to our present insignificance, we may well accept, I think, this forecast of future growth and change.

Professionalization, too, has by no means reached its limit. As has been pointed out, it is a symptom, rather than the thing itself. It is like a man's clothes, by which you can often trace the growth or decay of his self-respect. Pride in one's work and a tendency to exalt it is a healthy sign, provided there is something back of it. The formation of staff associations like that recently organized in New York is a good sign, so is the multiplication of professional bodies. The establishment of the A. L. A. in 1876 was the beginning of the whole library advance in this country. It was only a symptom, of course, but with the healthy growth of libraries I look for more signs of our pride in what we are doing, of our unwillingness to lower it or to alter its ideals.

The familiar question, "Is librarianship a profession?" reduces to a matter of definition. We are being professionalized for the purposes of this discussion if we are growing sufficiently in group consciousness to let it react favorably on our work.

One of the earliest developments of a feeling of professional pride in one's work is an insistence on the adequate training of the workers and on the establishment of

standards of efficiency both for workers and work. Here belongs a forecast not only of library school training, but of official inspection and certification, of systems of service, etc. Standardization of this kind is on the increase and is bound to be enforced with greater strictness in the future. In our professional training as in other professions the tendency is toward specialization. With us, this specialization will doubtless proceed on the lines of facilities for practice. An engineering school cannot turn out electrical engineers if the only laboratories that it has are devoted to civil and mechanical engineering. A specialist in abdominal surgery is not produced by experience in a contagious disease ward. Similarly we ought not to expect a school remote from public library facilities to specialize in public library work, or a school in close connection with a public library to produce assistants for the work of a university library. Increasing professional spirit among us will demand specialization according to equipment.

Popularization, some may think, has already gone to the limit. How can we be more of the people than we are today? Are we not, in sooth, a little too democratic, perhaps? Personally I feel that a good deal of the library's social democracy is on the surface. Any member of a privileged class will assure you that his own class constitutes "the people" and that the rest do not matter. The Athenians honestly thought that their country was a democracy, when it was really an oligarchy of the most limited kind. England honestly thought she had "popular" government when those entitled to vote were a very small part of the population. A library in a city of half a million inhabitants honestly thinks that a record of 100,000 cardholders entitles it to boast that its use extends to the whole population. We cannot say that we reach the whole number of citizens until we really do reach them. The school authorities can go out to the highways and hedges and compel them to come in; we cannot.

Herein doubtless lies one of our advantages. Our buildings are filled with willing users. It is our business to universalize the desire to read as the schools are universalizing the ability. But we have not yet done so, and popularization proceeds slowly. I cannot say that I see many indications of speeding up in the rate, although our increase in the recognition of groups, noted above, may have an influence here in future. As groups develop among that part of the population that uses the library least, our opportunity to extend our influence over that part will present itself. One such group is ready for us but we have never reached it—that of union labor. The recognition of the unions by the library and of the library by the unions has been unaccountably delayed, despite sporadic, well-meant, but ineffective efforts on both sides. No more important step for the intellectual future of the community can be taken than this extension of service.

Nationalization has just begun. It is speeding up and will go far, I am sure, in the next twenty years. Our libraries are getting used to acting as a unit. We should not like administrative nationalization and I see no signs of it; but nationalization in the sense of improved opportunities for team work and greater willingness to avail ourselves of them we shall get in increasing measure. For instance, one of our greatest opportunities lies before us in the inter-library loan. It knocks at our door, but we do not heed it because in this respect we have not begun yet to think nationally. But having begun national service in the various activities brought to the front by the war, we shall not, I am sure, lag behind much longer. The national organization of the A. L. A. has long provided us with a framework on which to build our national thoughts and our national deeds, but hitherto it has remained a mere scaffolding, conspicuous through the absence of any corresponding structure. The war is teaching us both to think and to act nationally, and after it is over I shall be astonished

if we are longer content to do each his own work. Our work is nationwide, in peace as in war and our tardy realization of this fact may be one of the satisfactory by-products of this world conflict.

Now it is not beyond the possibilities that the library movement, headed right and running free, may still fail because it meets some obstacle and goes to pieces. Are there any such in sight? I seem to see several, but I believe that we can steer clear. If we split on anything it will be on an unseen rock, and of such, of course, we can say nothing.

One rock is political interference. The library has had trouble with it of old and some of us are still struggling with it. It is assumed by those who put their trust in paper civil service that it has now been minimized. This overlooks the undoubted fact that in a great number of cases the civil service machinery has been captured by politicians, and now works to aid them, not to control them. The greatest danger of political interference in public libraries, now lies in well-meant efforts to turn them over to some local commission established to further the merit system, but actually working in harmony with a political machine.

Another rock on which we may possibly split is that of formalism. Machinery must be continually scrapped and replaced if progress is to be made. It will not grow and change like an organism. The library itself is subject to organic growth and change, but its machinery will not change automatically with it. If we foster in any way an idea that our machinery is sacred, that it is of permanent value and that conditions should conform to it instead of its conforming to them, our whole progress may come to an end. I have called this a rock, but it is rather a sort of Sargasso Sea where the library may whirl about in an eternity of seaweed.

Another obstacle, somewhat allied to this of formalism, is the "big head"—none the less dangerous because it is common and as detrimental to an institution as it is to an individual. Just as soon as a per-

son, or an institution, sits down and begins to appreciate himself or itself, to take stock of the services he or it is rendering the community, to wonder at their extent and value, those services are in a fair way to become valueless. The proper attitude is rather that of investigation to discover further possible kinds of service, with the exercise of ingenuity in devising ways to render them effectively.

We have occasionally been accused of taking the attitude of self-laudation, but I really do not think there is great danger of an epidemic of this malady. We do not receive enough encouragement. Once in a while, to be sure, someone tells us, or tells the public, what a great and valuable institution the public library is, but the treatment that we receive is generally mildly humorous when it is not characterized by downright indifference and neglect. Whenever a book comes into my hands telling of some movement in which I know that the library has borne an honorable part I always turn first to the index and search for recognition under the letter L. Generally it is not there; when it is, it is almost always inadequate. If we are attacked by the "big head," it will have to be a case of auto-intoxication.

Exploitation is another possible rock. I have already alluded to the danger of capture by a political machine, but there are other interests more subtle and quite as dangerous. Many a useful institution, intended to be nonpartisan, has been captured and used by some interest or other while remaining nonpartisan on the surface. Our safety, so far, has resided in the inability of most interests to see that we are worth capture. When the drive comes, as I believe it will, our continued safety will lie, not in resistance, but in an equal yielding to all—a willingness to act as the agent for all isms, religious, economic, political and industrial, without exalting one above another or emphasizing one at another's expense. Something of this we are already doing, and in so far as we succeed in it we are placing ourselves in a

position of vantage from which it will be very difficult to dislodge us.

Assuming the truth of all this—and it is something of an assumption, I grant you—what then, is our library of 1950 to be? An institution not very much larger or more expensively operated than our present maximum, although with a higher minimum, carried on with a more careful eye to economy and watching more jealously the quality of its output. It will have two units of service, as at present, the book and the citizen, but it will tend to regard the latter as primary, rather than the former and will shrink from no form of service that it can render him. The higher quality of its work will be reflected in the greater pride of the worker—in a spirit of professionalism that will insist on adequate training and proper compensation, and possibly will use organization to enforce these ideals. It will reach out somewhat further among the people than it does now, although not so much that the difference will be notable. Finally the teamwork between different libraries will be more frequent and effective, assistants will be exchanged freely, readers' cards used interchangeably and inter-library loans will take place easily and often.

What effect will these changes have on the desirability of library work as a profession? The only conclusion can be that it will be greatly increased. By this I mean that it will be more interesting, more likely to give pleasure to the worker as a by-product. I do not mean that it will necessarily pay very much better. The most interesting and pleasurable occupations are generally, I think, those that do not pay well in money. One should not expect full payment in both cash and pleasure. The exception is where the acquisition of money is itself the feature of the occupation that gives the pleasure. I do not quarrel with those who pursue this form of pleasure, but they certainly have no business to be librarians or teachers, or artists or authors, or to engage in any occupation which in itself constitutes to the worker the fullness of life and its il-

lumination. The library profession will make its appeal in 1950, as it does today, to men and women who like to work with and among and through books; who also like to work with and among and through people: who enjoy watching the interplay of relations between the man and the book and using them for the advancement of civilization. This is an intellectual and spiritual appeal, and it is not likely to be replaced by that which glitters on the metallic face of the dollar.

In taking leave of our subject we may go back to our opening simile of the railroad train. The flier that reaches New York is the same train that left Chicago;

its passengers have not greatly changed, and yet its environment is wholly different, so that the outlook of those within it has totally altered. It is in some such fashion that the library of 1950 will differ from that of today. It will be the same institution with the same staff, but it will have traveled far on the rails of time. Its environment, its outlook will be different, and in its response to that variation it must needs do different things and render a different service. May its motive power never fail, its machinery be kept well oiled, and the crew maintain their strength, intelligence and sanity!

WHAT THE CITY LIBRARY IS DOING TO HELP WIN THE WAR

By HILLER C. WELLMAN, *Librarian, City Library Association, Springfield, Mass.*

When war was declared, a new day dawned in America. There took place over night a complete transformation of values. Whatever the private interests and concerns of the individual, if the Government said go, he dropped all and went. Similarly, no matter what the previous functions and practice of the public library, any aid that it could properly render in connection with the war became paramount. Buildings, books, and service were to be regarded first with a view to the help they could appropriately give in the gigantic task before the nation.

In Springfield, the first and immediate duty seemed to be service to the officers and enlisted men who were at once stationed at the Armory and the Watershops. Drill manuals, guides for soldiers, French textbooks, books on aeroplanes, machine guns, and many other branches of military science and on military sanitation were liberally supplied. Personal letters were sent to officers inviting them to use the library's resources, and important technical works furnished, some of which were

not otherwise obtainable. Textbooks and reference books were furnished also for the classes receiving military instruction—both officers and men. Civilians of draft age were given publications describing the conditions of military life; and men who had taken the training at Plattsburg were provided with officer's manuals, works on military map making, and the like. The library early printed a list of books on military subjects, which has been widely used; and the khaki uniform is a common sight in the reading rooms.

Manufacturers of military supplies were another object of attention. They resort to the library for all sorts of information, often involving much research. A manufacturer of aeroplanes, for example, asks for tests showing the qualities of hickory; a maker of saddlery looks up publications on leather; a Government silk inspector refers to treatises on silk culture and spinning; a teacher in a school of aeronautics asks for the latest information in print; an army officer uses special dictionaries in translating an important military work; men from the factories consult all sorts of books on machinery, fuel oils, aeroplane